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Lucia A Keegan 01/23/2007 08:43:11 PM From DB/Inbox: Lucia A Keegan

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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 000253

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [TBIO](#) [EAID](#) [AORC](#) [PREL](#) [FR](#)
SUBJECT: PARIS CONFERENCE ON HEALTH PROTECTION IN
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES; MARCH 15-16, 2007

11. Action request contained in para 8. .

12. Summary. France will host a high-level international conference entitled, "Health Protection in Developing Countries: Breaking the Vicious Circle of Disease and Poverty," in Paris, March 15-16. This is an initiative of President Chirac, first proposed in St. Petersburg at the most recent G-8 summit. French organizers hope to bring together ministers and global health experts from some 50 countries, as well as representatives from international organizations, such as WHO, ILO, the OECD, and the World Bank. The conference will compare the most effective approaches to health protection in developing countries and propose new partnerships for systems of health protection. An overarching conference goal will be to highlight the need to partner efforts to battle global poverty with those to battle global disease. End Summary.

Paris Pushes Health Agenda

13. On January 18, Embassy science officers and health attache to OECD met with Jean-Christophe Deberre, Director of Development Policy at the Foreign Ministry to learn more about the upcoming high-level international health conference. Deberre described the conference, a Chirac initiative, as a follow on to the G-8 declarations in St. Petersburg on health, as well as to the conference held in Berlin in December 2005 (see report contained at www.shi-conference.de) under German Agency for Technical Cooperation, ILO and WHO auspices relating to social health protection in developing countries. Although the Germans have played a lead role in developing the topic of the importance of social health protection in developing countries, France - and in particular President Chirac - seeks an even broader global conversation on the topic. Not only is the conference under Chirac's auspices, but he is also scheduled personally to summarize the results at the conference's conclusion.

Two days and a communique

14. The conference will bring together experts from 50 countries, international organizations, including WHO, ILO, World Bank, and OECD, as well as ministers from around the world. The first day of the conference will be devoted to expert presentations and discussion of the issues related to health protection in developing countries. Four round table discussions will address: the impact of health on poverty reduction and economic growth; comparative analysis of existing approaches to health coverage in developing countries; comparative analysis of the different funding mechanisms and their sustainability; and proposals for integrating health coverage into existing health systems in developing countries.

15. The second day's talks are planned at the ministerial level. According to materials provided, ministers and directors of international organizations will tackle one of the conference objectives, "...to adopt a political agenda enabling the international community to assist in the progressive implementation of mechanisms for health protection in developing countries." In addition, ministers will further refine a consensus communique for presentation to President Chirac who will chair the closing session. (NB. Embassy officers asked whether a draft communique would be available for comment prior to the conference and were told that a draft would be circulated two weeks prior to the conference for early comment.)

Expectations...

16. Embassy officers queried Deberre regarding proposed conference outcomes. He commented that the conference is not designed to generate specific outcomes, but rather to facilitate an international consensus around the need to partner efforts to battle global poverty with those to battle global disease and highlight the insufficiency of existing mechanisms to meet the challenges of social health protection. The hope is that representatives of countries and international organizations attending the event will critically examine these questions and flesh out the issues.

U.S. perspectives solicited

17. Deberre is keen to learn U.S. perspectives on the topic of the conference, as well as proposed conference modalities. He and his deputy Elodie Montetagaud plan to travel to Washington the week of January 22 to meet with officials of HHS, USAID, and possibly the Department of State (in addition to meeting with representatives of international organizations based in Washington, D.C.) to solicit U.S.

views and expert and high-level attendance at the conference.

The scientific committee has prepared a lengthy "concept paper" in French, as background for the meeting. An English translation of the paper is expected shortly. Upon receipt, the Embassy will forward it to OES/IHA.

18. ACTION REQUESTED: Washington agencies (Department of State, HHS, and USAID) should anticipate receiving invitations from the Government of France to attend this conference. In light of French presidential support for the conference, Embassy would appreciate learning USG approach to it as early as possible.

Please visit Paris' Classified Website at:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/paris/index.cfm>

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